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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, yesterday I joined people around the world in marking International Women's Day. Since the beginning of the 20th century, variations of this day have been observed as an opportunity to highlight the issues that directly affect the lives of women and girls. At the same time, it is a day to reflect upon the lives, accomplishments, and struggles of women in our personal and collective histories. Much has been achieved since the first celebrants of National Women's Day began advocating for voting rights, shorter working hours, and higher pay. I am pleased that this Congress has already added to those achievements by passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to help ensure protection from pay discrimination.

Nevertheless, the need for such activism continues and the theme selected by the United Nations for this year's International Women's Day reminds us of that. The theme is "Women and men united to end violence against women and girls." Throughout the world, whether in war-torn villages in eastern Congo or Darfur or Sri Lanka, this theme is tragically relevant. Here in America, too, this year's theme is tragically relevant. Despite all the progress we have made, gender-based violence and sexual assault remain a devastatingly regular occurrence.

We must do more to protect women and girls here at home and abroad whose lives are affected by this violence. I believe one way we can affirm our commitment to improving the status of women domestically and internationally is by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—CEDAW—now. The Convention was signed by the U.S. in 1980 and favorably reported by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2002 with several reservations, understandings and declarations clarifying the Senate's position. Nevertheless, it still hasn't been considered by the full Senate. Our ratification would send an important message to the international community about our commitment to the rights of women and girls.

We still have a long way to go, but International Women's Day reminds us that transformation is possible. We

recognize the awesome power of our heroes who have struggled for change, especially women who have refused to give in or remain silent in the face of injustice. Many famous women come to mind, but there are also so many more whose names may not be noted in the pages of history but whose courage and compassion have made a lasting difference in the lives they've touched. Let's commit today to honor their legacy and to work for a lasting end to violence against women and girls.

IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering well over 1,200, are heartbreaking and touching. While energy prices have dropped in recent weeks, the concerns expressed remain very relevant. To respect the efforts of those who took the opportunity to share their thoughts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through an address set up specifically for this purpose to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

My husband and I are not feeling the effects as much as others, except perhaps at the supermarket. I use Valley Transit or walk because I am legally blind and cannot drive. My husband has been a cyclist most of his life and also has the mindset of using alternative transportation. We live close to his place of employment, so he walks to work. Our 19-year-old daughter, who has a vehicle of her own, has parked it for the most part and rides her bike to work from the Northwest Boise to Zoo Boise. We are pleased that she has been influenced by our lifestyle of not being tied to a vehicle for transportation.

It has been my opinion for many years that many Boiseans are greedy motorists. They must have their cars, a huge part of their image...too good for public transportation, and they are rude behind the wheel. As a pedestrian, I cannot tell you how many times I have almost been hit in the crosswalk when I had the walk signal. Many times a turning motorist has accelerated to beat me through the crosswalk. Also, I have been in the middle of a busy intersection with the walk signal and had to stop for turning drivers as they were not going to stop for me. That infuriates me!

And then, we have the air quality issues in the Treasure Valley that most greedy motorists totally ignore...it is not their problem, apparently. How irresponsible!!

So, to be honest with you, I am not so unhappy about the situation, and only hope

that people will start using alternative modes of transportation and that there will be less cars on the street for both the safety of pedestrians and the improvement of air quality. Maybe it will take a bigger price hike to alert citizens to their responsibility for the issues of their community and the environment.

MARILYN.

PS. I am a respected, educated native of Boise and my motto is, "If the bus is good enough for me, it is good enough for everyone." I know the local transit system is not the best, but if perhaps increased rider-ship increases revenue, perhaps there could be an increase in routes and efficiency.

Our lives have been greatly affected by rising energy costs. My local store prices are high and we have been unable to afford gas to go 65 miles to a cheaper outlet grocery store.

Gas prices have made it almost impossible for us to visit our children and grandchildren who live 4-1/2 hours and 2-1/2 hours away respectively. We used to visit them (and they visited us) about once a month. Now we are reduced to twice a year.

Propane and electricity have risen too, making eating out or a movie impossible. We are a lower middle class family making about \$40,000 a year, yet we cannot afford anything but the basics. How are we supposed to "tighten our belts" any further?

These energy considerations should have been taken into account while President Clinton had his first term. At least then we would be in a much better position today. Not that I am excusing this Congress or President from their responsibility. Please do not wait any longer to protect our citizens from slowly going broke. Otherwise we may not be able to afford Congress at all!

RENATA, Kamiah.

I absolutely agree with your policy of using our own resources to keep America's economy going. Our electrical company has diesel-powered trucks to travel a six-state area, and we are not able to pass along all our overhead because of the tight bidding of jobs. Also, our employees have to have more wages just to keep even or we are not able to keep them. Bottom line—our net return is down.

The time to act was several years ago, but in reality ANWR and coastal drilling has to be on fast track along with oil refining capacities increased. Some time when we reach a crisis mode other alternatives are explored but in the infancy stage the timing is not here yet to allow an impact, although we need to proceed ahead with incentives so other forms of energy can come on line. Has the federal land bank been explored to use fees paid for no production to be applied to raise (example: safflower seed for diesel fuel)??

I appreciate the effort you are doing for our nation and state.

TOM.

I do not support more drilling or any other method of increasing the oil supply. Rather, I would see our money go to sustainable sources. Fund quality research and development of alternative energy (other than those that will compete with food supply) rather than throwing good money after bad.

SIMONSONS, Boise.

Like most Idahoans, the escalating price of gasoline is hitting my family very hard. We do not drive SUVs; we drive small 4-cylinder vehicles. But, when the price of gasoline is four times higher than it was a few years ago, and our wages have not increased, we are having a hard time, even living paycheck to paycheck.